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ABSTRACT

A 1996 research project in St. Paul, Minnesota, found high rates of poverty and unemployment in its American Indian population and a lack of connection between social service agencies and the Indian community. A follow-up project aimed to support the Indian community in identifying its own priorities for research and action. Eight focus groups were attended by 63 American Indian residents, community leaders, and program managers; all participants but one were American Indian women. Various themes emerged: (1) the need to bring together the entire St. Paul Indian community, which transcends neighborhood boundaries; (2) using American Indian gatherings as opportunities for cultural renewal and sharing of resources and information; (3) lack of services for Indian youth and the need for culturally specific youth programming to strengthen Indian values and combat substance abuse and violence; (4) the need for a multi-service community center for American Indians; (5) lack of transportation and childcare as barriers to Indian employment; and (6) lack of data on American Indians. Current initiatives include formation of an Indian Child Welfare Act group to address issues concerning out-of-home placements of Indian children, communication between county social services and Indian community leaders, and archdiocese plans to provide a community center building. Focus group recommendations and suggestions are summarized. (SV)

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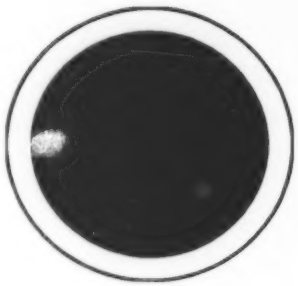

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Purpose of Study

This study centers on the enigmatic situation of American Indians in the Frogtown and Summit-University (FSU) neighborhoods of St. Paul, Minnesota. This ethnic group and its lifestyle have remained virtually unknown to the public, policy makers and civic leaders in the city of St. Paul. For years American Indians were repeatedly the target of research conducted by non-Indian researchers, especially college and university researchers, but still they stay unknown. To those who would like to obtain reliable information about American Indians, this study should be useful. A major purpose behind the study was to search for issues that challenge the Indian community. The study also intended to identify potential American Indian leadership who could engage those issues. Finally, the study wanted to assess what it would take to mobilize an Indian community to action.

An earlier report by the American Indian Research and Policy Institute (1996) studied whether social service agencies had a favorable impact on American Indians living in these two neighborhoods. A significant communication and coordination gap was found to exist between social service agencies and the American Indian community. The absence of a catalyst for good communications between social service agencies and the Indian community exacerbates the critical issues associated with poverty. Actively involving American Indians in planning for community improvements was a good idea.

The 1996 report analyzed the alarming growth of poverty among American Indians, examined the issue of poverty as understood through their eyes of American Indians, and queried social service agencies. Most of those agencies were unaware that Indians even lived in the neighborhoods. The study examined social service agencies to find out if they delivered culturally specific services to American Indian clients. It was found that they did not. Since social service agency personnel were unaware of American Indians living in the neighborhood, it was easy to understand why culturally specific programming did not exist. Social service agency staff said they recognized a need to increase their own knowledge about culture to better serve American Indians.

An American Indian perspective needs to be presented on poverty issues. This was established in the earlier report and was based on findings of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. American Indians expressed a need for empowering themselves, and that it would be most productive if such empowerment activities came from within their community. This was a driving force behind this project. Indians who participated in the earlier study said they wanted "continued and direct involvement . . . to develop a strategy to overcome the problems [as] outlined."

Those earlier statements formed the objectives for the current project. The project had three parts: 1) Identify as many American Indians as possible living in the Frogtown/Summit-University neighborhoods. 2) Conduct at least six focus groups with Indian people to gather information to name the strengths and needs of the Indian community. 3) Identify potential American Indian leaders who could develop an action plan

Basic Demographics

Minnesota census data (1990) revealed American Indian population as 49,909. Of this number, 30,806 lived in urban areas (62%). As a caveat, the reader should use caution when using these data (starting with and including the 1970 census), because the precise number of American Indians is in dispute. In 1970 and after, the method for enumerating Indians used, "self-identification, which allowed a person to claim American Indian identity without verification. Prior to1970 American Indians often identified themselves as non-Indian. They did this to avoid negative social stigmatization and/or discrimination from non-Indians.

This trend began to change in the 1960s when Indians began to reclaim their identity. American Indian communities, since then, experienced a resurgence in Indian traditions emphasizing language, culture and spirituality. This trend appears to have reversed the negative stereotypes of the past while instilling pride and hope in American Indians.

The Frogtown/Summit University neighborhoods (Planning districts 7 and 8) are an economically depressed area of St. Paul. Located near the downtown area and separated by a major freeway, more than a third of the people live below the poverty level. Statistics from the 1990 Census data illustrate these facts:

- 5,075 persons, or 35.5% of all persons were below the poverty level
- The 1989 per capita income was $7,376.00
- Planning District 7 had 407 American Indians
- Planning District 8 had 207 American Indians

Data, according to the Office of Research and Evaluation Ramsey County Community Human Services 1992-1995, show:

- 43 cases or 10% of American Indian people are on AFDC in Frogtown.
- 32 cases or 15.4% of American Indian people are on AFDC in Summit/University.

Further, poverty rates increased from 30% to 44% for American Indians between 1979-1989. During this time, 24% of American Indian men and 15% percent of American Indian women were unemployed, compared to 6% of white men and 4% of white women, respectively.

Culturally Appropriate Research

A Model that Works With American Indians

The current project was built on the foundation that American Indians must tell their own story. They have a story to tell, but are seldom asked; and when they are asked, it is done in a style with which they are not comfortable. Thus, much of what American Indians have to share does not surface. Therefore, the American Indian Research and Policy Institute is in a good position to obtain information from Indian people. Primarily because it is a reputable organization where Indian community members can reveal and share their thoughts, knowing they will be treated respectfully.

Reality-based Research

The AIRPI conducts its research via a participatory method called "reality-based research." This research method involves the members of the Indian community in a participatory style. To them, without their involvement it would be just another research project. Reality-based research involves Indian people early in framing the process of interviews, surveys and talking circles.

The scientific research paradigm traditionally used by academicians is based largely on observable or quantitative data. This research approach has not served American Indians very well because it is not culturally sensitive or appropriate. This scientific model contains and depends on mainstream social values that make certain assumptions that have little meaning for American Indians. Consequently, because educators learn this way, very little accurate information about American Indians exists in America's educational systems.

By thoroughly participating in developing questions used in the research project, Indians are vested in the project and can see a reflection of themselves in its outcomes. The outcomes then belong to the people who participated. This results in empowerment of self and community and is more likely to develop ownership by the participants. Reclaiming identity and tribal definition of culture is a serious challenge for American Indians. This is a fundamental step for any Indian community that wishes for empowerment of itself. For too long, definitions of American Indians were in the hands of non-Indians.

For this project we employed a variety of methodologies. Because this project was multi faceted, we used many outreach activities and standard enumeration methods. We also relied heavily on focus groups.

American Indian Approach to Research

Talking circles: An excellent method for organizing activities in the American Indian community is the use of "Talking Circles." For ease in understanding, the term "talking circle" will be used interchangeably with the term, focus group. Focus groups are familiar to Indians because they resemble an age-old method Indians called, "talking circles." Throughout history, American Indians traditionally used this form of group discussion to resolve disputes and debate issues of communal concern. In the talking circles, Indians would assemble in a circle, depending on the importance of the issue, and use an eagle feather or some other item. The item was then passed around the circle from person to person. The person who held the item in his or her hand was the only person to speak. Everyone else was silent until it was their turn to hold the item and speak. To this day, even without the eagle feather, Indians respectfully and intuitively control themselves in this manner.

Mainstream education and scientific research: In the scientific research paradigm, focus groups are a standard method of research. However, in using this focus group methodology in the Indian community, it is necessary to modify its mechanics for several reasons. First, the scientific research paradigm does not work well among American Indians because it does not relate well to Indian values and beliefs. Second, focus group questions are prepared by others (non-Indians) in advance, without adequate participation from the Indian community. Third, focus groups are generally replicated numerous times to validate information (Indians say, "why is it done again and again, isn't it good enough that I told you once, do you not trust my word")? Modifying focus group design is done so that the process is more meaningful to individual Indian persons. Without modification there is little initiative or participation by Indians.

American Indians had, over time, built a distrust for "researchers." This distrust developed partly because researchers did not share results of their studies with American Indians. Since the research community was unaware of this developing distrust, it simply went unchecked. Unless researchers can compel themselves to respect and incorporate the basic tenets of the Indian people's culture, this condition will remain.

A barrier to successfully addressing the societal needs of American Indians is that they are inadequately studied in America's educational systems. The absence of information about a people who are indigenous to this land ought to make educators curious. If the issues of American Indians are to be adequately dealt with, educators must do a better job of learning and teaching about American Indians.

Non-Indians simply do not understand why discussions among Indians are less structured. These and other cultural issues make it extremely important to have experienced American Indian personnel designing projects and working with the American Indian community. This project was directed by John Poupart, President of AIRPI and assisted by Don Eubanks, University of Minnesota Graduate Research Assistant. Both are American Indian.

Identifying American Indians Living in the Project area

Identifying an overwhelming low-income population who is Indian was difficult. Besides the usual psycho social issues related to poverty, low-income Indians have historically relied on rental housing stock. Low-income families who rely on rental housing become a fluid, mobile community. Also, the question of who is an American Indian presented its own dilemma. For this report, an individual who identified him/herself as American Indian was counted.

Several strategies were employed in creating a data base of potential Indian participants:

Street Identification: A method called, "street sight identification" was used. This means, a person is asked, if a person looks like he or she might be American Indian, "are you American Indian?" If the response was yes, these names were added to the list. This method applied to individuals seen walking or shopping in the Frogtown/Summit University area. This method was the least used because of the perceived problems associated with safety for both research assistant and community members.

Community Organizations and Businesses: Community organizations and businesses were important because they offer services that attract American Indian consumers. Organizations included: Frogtown Resource Center, NorthEnd Early Childhood Family Education, the Ronald M. Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning, Ain Dah Yung, St. Paul Indians in Unity, Martin Luther King Center, the American Indian Family Center, FoodSmart, Disabled Veterans Discount Store, Midway Bingo and various other businesses. Information about the research project was left along with sign-up sheets for American Indians at all locations. The Frogtown Family Resource Center and North End Early Childhood Family Education (E.C.F.E.) offer GED and parenting classes to American Indians. They also allowed us to collect names and addresses of American Indian participants

St. Paul Indian Education: The American Indian Education Section of the St. Paul Public Schools mailed out a request form, on behalf of AIRPI, asking people if they considered themselves American Indian. All self identified American Indian children and their families are kept on file at the American Indian Education office. Due to the Minnesota Data Privacy Act, we were unable to directly use this information, which would have allowed us to do the mailing ourselves. Many American Indian families that received the mailing lived outside the project area. This method also excluded Indian families who did not have children in the St. Paul school district and families who failed to self-identify as American Indian.

Ramsey County: The 1996 FSU report found sixty-three percent (63%) of those involved with the first project lived at or below the poverty level. With this information in hand, we approached Ramsey County Human Services with the belief that services may have been provided to these families. Ramsey County's Human Services Planning department agreed to mail the same letter and postcard used for the American Indian Education mailing. Again, due to the Minnesota Data

Privacy Act we were not allowed access to these records directly. A weakness of this method was that it missed American Indian families who had not used Ramsey County public assistance. Consequently, we also used several other methods for identifying participants.

Cultural gathering: The American Indian Research and Policy Institute recognizes that strong cultural ties exist among Indians and draws them to social events such as powwows and feasts. Therefore, powwows and feasts were attended in St. Paul to gather names from the American Indian community. This proved to be much harder than anticipated. We had to rely on sight identification while competing with activities such as dancing and singing that take place at Powwows. One powwow was sponsored by the Juel Fairbanks Aftercare Center, a chemical dependency agency in the American Indian community. They also held an open house and feast. They agreed to allow an address to the crowd during the feast to raise awareness of the project and to gather additional names.

Reverse phone directory: Another method of identifying Indians, while labor-intensive yielded marginal results. A reverse telephone directory was used to find names, addresses and telephone numbers of families and individuals living in the 55103 and 55104 zip codes (these zip codes encompass the project area). Names were gathered by calling as many listings as possible. Using this process we relied on people who answered the telephone to self identify. A weakness in this method was that American Indian families and individuals without telephones could not be reached.

Inadvertently, some names were added to the data base through miscommunication. When asked if they were American Indian, or anyone in their family was American Indian, some had initially responded positively. When personally contacted to participate in a focus group, we found some respondents to be African Americans or Black, but all claimed to have grandparents or other relatives who were Indian. For purposes of this report, we used self-identification as the determining factor, and when asked if they identified themselves as American Indian, their responses were negative. These names were then not included on the list.

Using these strategies, seventy names were identified in the Frogtown/Summit University area. Of these names, four were eliminated due to miscommunication. We then began the process of contacting individuals to attend focus groups. Six additional names had to be removed from the list due to people moving and leaving no forwarding address. Sixty American Indians were identified in the project area.

While using all these methods for identifying American Indians, apparently no convenient method was in place. No system exists that adequately deals with American Indians who have a notably highly mobile and transient rate. Even where names and addresses of American Indians are known, many had moved with no forwarding address. Despite these obstacles, eight focus groups were held.

Focus Groups

Forty-three people attended five focus groups in the Frogtown/Summit-University neighborhoods and 20 attended three focus groups on St. Paul's east side. Focus groups were conducted at the American Indian Research and Policy Institute (AIRPI), the Ronald M. Hubb Center for Lifelong Learning, and the American Indian Family Center (AIFC), all located in the Indian community.

The focus group sessions opened with a general description of what the project wished to accomplish. This was followed by contributions from those attending. Rather than a question and answer session, an exchange occurred about issues focus group members felt strongly about. From such talk came our findings.

The open-ended nature of the group was beneficial because it allowed communication to circulate and develop around key themes. The first exchange in many groups centered on social services and their relationship with American Indians. Discussion centered on whether community members felt adequately served by existing social services or, did they think a need existed for an American Indian social service agency? Another theme concerned American Indian leadership within the community. While no prepared questions were used, several questions did emerge from the discussion. Questions arose such as: " What do you look for in a leader, who would you follow, who do you consider a leader, and are their leaders now in the American Indian community?"

All focus group participants were American Indians who resided in the neighborhoods and/or American Indian managers of programs and/or leaders who work in the American Indian community. The vast majority of participants were American Indian women. Interestingly, only one participant was an American Indian male.

Findings

American Indian community transcends neighborhood boundaries: The information that participants offered in the talking circles provided a clear representation of the community's perception on various issues. Participants in the first four talking circles strongly believed that American Indians living elsewhere in St Paul should be included in the project. This was among the first items to emerge in the talking circles

As noted earlier, this project initially included American Indian residents living specifically in the Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods Sentiments expressed by Indians living in these neighborhoods and who had participated in the first four focus groups made statements such as, "I was told all about the boundaries of Frogtown, but I don't think we can limit it [participation] to just that area; some [Indian] people live as far away as the suburbs but feel as part of the Indian community; we should be talking about Native Americans in all of St. Paul and; all the Indian people are on the Eastside."

A Shift in the Project's Geographical Focus

Unable to locate or connect with American Indians in the Frogtown/Summit-University neighborhoods, and recognizing that many American Indians with addresses on the east side were surfacing, caused the American Indian Research and Policy Institute to rethink its initial project plan. A discovery that American Indians were moving to the eastside suggested the project should include Indians in that area of the city. After consulting with leadership at the Children, Families and Community Initiative we were approved to redirect our focus and attention to the east side of St. Paul.

Current census data shows that 614 Indians live in the Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods, while the east side neighborhoods, Planning Districts 2, 4 and 5 there are 1,184 American Indians. Based on our knowledge gained through the talking circles, the numbers of Indian people on the east side are growing while the numbers in Frogtown/summit-University are decreasing.

Participants of the talking circles expressed themselves with dignity. They did not want to place indiscriminate blame on others for the serious social issues in their community. They were positive minded and searched for answers to the dilemma within themselves and within their own community. They challenged themselves to find ways to improve communications, to better educate teens about the role of father and how important it is to be a father, how to keep families intact, using the power of government to advance their issues, to educate themselves about issues so that policy makers might be approached, how to navigate through the maze of programs asking for what they want and teaching parents how to identify their needs.

Several concrete suggestions came for the east side talking circles:

- To provide opportunities through talking circles or community/town meetings to bring together St. Paul Indian people to talk about issues in the Indian community,
- Develop support for American Indian males.
- Join in a Minneapolis-St.Paul American Indian coalition,
- Seek an ICWA advocate for St. Paul,
- Establish a general fund at the American Indian Family Center for emergencies,
- Develop American Indian child care on a 24-hour basis and,
- Create a mentoring project and/or forum for developing parenting skills.

The positive response to the people's desire to expand the project correlates with American Indian family structure and cultural ties. Understanding the culture and how it influences decision making for American Indians is very important for those who might someday work in the Indian community. Several quotes are offered here to help in understanding the importance of cultural ways of American Indians. Dr. John RedHorse, who has worked and published extensively on American Indian family structures, states:

> American Indian family networks assume a structure that is radically different from other extended family units in Western society. The accepted structural boundary of the European model, for example, is the household. Thus, an extended family is defined as three generations within a single household. American Indian family networks, however, are structurally open and assume a village-type characteristic. Their extension is inclusive of several households representing significant relatives along both vertical and horizontal lines. (1978 p. 68)

Historically, American Indians lived and socialized in extended family groups and this continues through today. Cultural norms require group participation to survive. Personal values are gauged by one's contribution to the community.

> This basic foundation in which family is nurtured and communities are formed is carried out through conditions of individual responsibility and obligation. Communities are always made up of interrelated families. Institutional responsibility is communally held, commonly understood and commonly practiced. Herein is the stability of the family and community. Individual worth and value take on meaning wholly within the context of the group. Tribal customary law regulates this system which, for the most part, is sustained through the oral tradition by the family and rarely by tribal government. (A Report on the Condition and Status of Native American Children and Families, NAES College, 1995)

The cohesiveness established in the American Indian family structure extends to the band, reservation and nation. This strong cultural tie continues to bind Indians in urban locations and the idea of an *Indian community* transcends city neighborhoods, planning districts and other politically designated boundaries. Understanding how American Indian family structures and cultural values link American Indians together eases understanding of why American Indian participants wanted to include *all Indians* living in St. Paul.

What Causes Indian People to Cluster: American Indians were asked, "what brings Indian people together?" Focus group discussion centered on *gatherings*, as illustrated by the following statements, "Indians tend to gather for social events that are more that just social

gathering such as, sharing of resources; maybe there should be a feast or dinner of some kind to draw more people and get more people (Indians) involved."

> Historically, tribes in North America held ceremonies celebrating successful hunts, food gathering, or warfare. These ceremonies allowed the people to give thanks, honor their deceased relatives, or deal with special honors such as name-giving ceremonies, adoptions and coming of age rites. Sometimes they renewed allegiances and friendships with members of visiting tribes. The ceremonies often involved dancing and feasting. The word powwow derives from the Algonquin for a gathering of medicine men or spiritual leaders in a curing ceremony, a 'pauau' or 'Pau wau.' (Chris Roberts, p. 14, 1992).

Today, pow wows continue to function as a conduit that strengthens American Indian cultural values and norms. Pow wows and gatherings provide Indian people an opportunity to renew friendships, maintain extended family connections, while also sharing resources and information.

Participants focused on youth: Another theme that emerged from the focus groups concerned social service delivery. There was concern expressed about the lack of services for American Indian youth. Remarks such as, "there is a gap of services for youth and teens; I feel the younger men have no direction in their lives; programs for kids are needed; there needs to be something for the youth that provides (positive) role models; we need safer places for youth to gather where they can identify with other Indian kids; there are programs for African American and Hmong youth, but nothing for our (Indian) kids."

The lack of culturally specific programming for American Indian youth and teens surfaced in every focus group. Culturally specific programming for Indian youth was talked about as positive reinforcement for identity, to strengthen Indian values and norms, and to combat isolation, drugs, gang involvement and violence.

Multi-service community center: Another issue expressed was the need for an Indian organization that could provide social, cultural, community services and advocacy. "Not knowing anyone else and not having one place to go was hard when I first moved to town; I don't know what services are offered by the existing Native American programs; there is nothing focused on Native American people; American Indian people need a hang out; what our community is missing is an agency that houses all the programs to provide complete programming for the entire family, whether they live in the neighborhood or not we still need a meeting place for Indians and a one-stop shopping place. Location is not important, but transportation is."

Non-Indian social service agencies: Interestingly, very little was said about existing social service agencies located within the project boundaries. Focus group participants were asked about using social service programs and most responses revolved around foodshelves or daily labor. "Need for more foodshelves. At existing foodshelves, the workers make you feel unwanted and; there should be daily labor place for American Indians."

Transportation and child care: Transportation and child care were also presented as barriers to full employment for American Indian people. These barriers prevented people from reaching social services and jobs. "We need a place where they have a van that can pick up and take people to where the jobs are; I think transportation is a big problem and; the biggest barriers are transportation and child care."

Data on American Indians

We found no agency that kept a centralized data base regarding American Indians, save for the 1990 Census Data. Virtually every social service agency, including Ramsey County Social Services, did not keep organized, accessible data on American Indians. This is troubling, considering the highly disproportional representation of American Indians in poverty. Also, no American Indian agency collects, stores or analyzes data on American Indians, except limited, internal data.

Summary

This project was intended as a follow-up to a 1996 research project conducted by the American Indian Research and Policy Institute. The earlier study noted the "disconnect" between social service agencies in the area and the American Indian community. It was thought that the Indian community could come up with its own responses to the critical nature of poverty. Thus, this second project was initiated.

It became apparent, very early in the current project's activities that the number of American Indians living in the two targeted neighborhoods had significantly declined. It was unlikely, if we held to our original objectives that the project would turn out to be meaningful. It was at this point that we were granted approval from CFCI to shift the project's emphasis.

The "summit" activity originally scheduled in the project's plan did not occur. Meeting in small groups was a more favorable choice to individual members of the Indian community. Outcomes of those smaller groups defined issues the summit would not have otherwise produced. Time and expense were major factors in deciding to develop the recommendations of this report as an action plan. Increasing the number of focus groups from six to eight also helped to cover what might otherwise be missed in the summit.

Simultaneous with this project, other American Indian community resource initiatives were developing. An East Metro Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) group was formed. This group met to engage issues around out-of-home placement of American Indian children in Ramsey county and to signal the need for an ICWA advocate in the system.

Ramsey county social services called for a meeting with local St. Paul Indian organization leaders to assess whether they were providing efficient social service delivery to the Indian community. More recently, The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced plans to provide a building for the St. Paul Indian community to house social service programming and space for some spiritual/religious/community events. Planning meetings have already occurred and a collaborative between leaders in the St. Paul Indian community and the Archdiocese was formed. The Archdiocese, represented by Fr. James Notebaart, is working with the Indian community to decide where this building is to be located. The American Indian Research and Policy Institute is intimately involved in this initiative and helped develop a survey instrument for agencies in the Indian community.

While the project shifted from its original format, objectives of the project were fulfilled through alternate methods. A redirection of focus on the Indian population happened because of a noticeable trend in the American Indian moving to the east side of St. Paul. We also expanded the number of focus groups from six to eight. Leaders in the Indian community are identified via

attendance at the focus group activities and other social events. In fairness to them, and because we did not inform them that they would not be identified, their identity will remain protected.

Several current initiatives in the St. Paul American Indian community show promise. For example, on the east side a major project was started by the East Side Neighborhood Development Co.(ESNDC), a local economic development corporation, to increase employment, support economic development and provide housing development. The American Indian Research and Policy Institute provided a critical link in bringing together ESNDC and the American Indian Family Center, located on the east side (and its many partners), to do data mapping for people of color on the east side. This project is now under way.

American Indian culture is significantly evident throughout all aspects of this project's activities. Merely acknowledging that American Indians possess a unique culture does no good without knowing the importance of culture is to them. If social programming is to be effective for the Indian community, its content must include and reflect American Indian cultural values and norms. The efficacy promoted by inclusion of cultural aspects in programming for American Indians is a dynamic that policy makers should learn to recognize.

Expecting American Indians to abandon their culture, which is their identity, to meet expectations of mainstream policy makers has proved unworkable. American Indians have and will continue to resist "assimilation." For too long, efforts to change the Indian have occurred. Improved results would occur for policy makers if they recognized that culture, especially for American Indians, can be a cornerstone to strengthening responses to the challenges of poverty.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Every agency that works with American Indians should collect data on this population.

Discussion: State and local units of government, since they are the closest units of government to Indian populations, should begin to collect data on American Indians. Data should be "user friendly" and accessible to leadership in the American Indian community. American Indian social service agencies and its leaders must begin to collect data, and these data, where practicable, be fed into a centralized data base.

Recommendation: Identify existing cultural strengths and social service delivery weaknesses among Indians living in the neighborhood.

Discussion: Needs assessments in the Indian communities often rely on the "deficit" model while the "assets" model is overlooked. A tremendous amount of natural human resources exists in the American Indian community upon which social programs can be built. Often "new" programs are suggested when the same or better results can be achieved by using existing strong cultural resources.

Recommendation: A multi-purpose agency should be established in the American Indian community.

Discussion: Significant benefits for the American Indian community may occur if agencies shared a common building. Agencies close to each other would greatly enhance communications and planning.

Recommendation: The American Indian community should study the phenomenon of the "invisible Indian male" and bring forth responses to connect father and child.

Discussion: Considerable discussion occurred about the absence of the American Indian male in the American Indian community; but just as absent were recommendations of what to do about this condition.

Recommendation: Community meetings should begin immediately to further develop an action agenda.

Discussion: In keeping with the style of identifying leadership among American Indians, town

meetings are an excellent means. These town meetings are a place where issues of concern can be expressed and ranked. It is also an excellent forum to designate who will be expected to lead each issue.

Recommendation: In addition to current youth programming, additional culturally specific programs for American Indian youth should be developed.

Discussion: Invariably, discussion in focus groups gravitated toward what should be done with youth who are troubled or "at-risk."

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